

Kaplan, Philip

From: Kaplan, Philip
Sent: Monday, May 02, 2011 11:19 AM
To: 'hiattf@washpost.com'; 'oped@washpost.com'
Subject: Op-Ed Submission by Nigerian Foreign Minister

Please find below an op-ed entitled The New Nigeria, submitted by Nigerian Foreign Minister Odein Ajumogobia. The piece addresses the recent presidential, parliamentary and governors elections in Nigeria, the violence that followed and the commitment of President Goodluck Jonathan to bring about a more transparent Nigeria.

-----Original Message-----

From: odein@ajumogobia.com [mailto:odein@ajumogobia.com]
Sent: Monday, May 02, 2011 4:28 AM
To: Kaplan, Philip
Subject: Op ed

A New Nigeria

By H. Odein Ajumogobia
(The writer is the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria)

My country has just completed three rounds of federal and state elections that have been regarded by most Nigerians and acknowledged by the international community as the most free and fair in our history. This is a considerable accomplishment in a nation of some 150 million people who have experienced military rule and suffered a recurring history of doubtful elections in much of the fifty years since securing independence from Great Britain in 1960.

In May 2010, President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan assumed full responsibilities of the Presidency in an orderly constitutional transition of power following the death of our former President Umaru Musa Yar Adua. President Jonathan promptly pledged to ensure that the elections set for 2011 would be free and fair. He consulted extensively and set in motion a process to redeem this commitment. In October, he appointed a respected expert, Professor Attahiru Jega, as Chair of Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and invested him with full powers to ensure that high standards of integrity and effectiveness would guide the conduct of the elections and the counting of votes. These decisions were not popular with all our politicians and their supporters; change rarely is. Predictably there was some resistance, despite Professor Jega's exemplary efforts to make the elections credible, free and fair. And they were - acclaimed to have been substantially so by both local and international observers.

Still, claims of a resurgence of some of our old election demons were the pretext for senseless and wanton post-electoral violence and formal complaints of electoral malpractices from some candidates. Needless to say, the Courts will have an opportunity to review all allegations of abuse and the chips will fall where they may. The President has pledged that those responsible for the post-election carnage and any proven electoral offences will be brought to justice.

Nigeria is a robust developing but still imperfect democracy which has striven to excel in this election and surmount a legacy of ethnic and religious tensions. We are a federal republic with a population comprising some 250 distinct ethnic identities that is largely Muslim in the North and Christian in the South. Countries, including leading democracies, which have themselves contended with ethnic, racial or religious tension and strife, will appreciate that overcoming deep-seated mistrust in sections of a diverse polity requires patience, wisdom and understanding.

No person can attain the presidency of Nigeria without widespread support across ethnic and religious lines. This is indeed one of the imperatives of our Constitution. The person elected as President must win, not just the highest number of votes cast at the election. Dr Jonathan received almost double the number of votes - 22.5million votes - of his closest rival's 12.2 million votes - but must also obtain "not less than one quarter of the votes cast ... in each of at least two thirds of the thirty-six states of the Federation." Dr Jonathan met this latter condition in thirty-one states.

Nonetheless, this remarkable electoral process was followed in several Northern states of the country by deplorable violence. The carnage came in response to unexpected or undesired electoral outcomes; it was fuelled further by an incendiary mix of deliberate misinformation and falsehood, massive youth unemployment and disillusionment.

President Jonathan has dedicated his presidency to overcoming these serious concerns and to unifying the nation. That means, above all, outreach to all sections of the country and showing respect for all of Nigeria's citizens regardless of tribe, tongue or faith.

This is the kind of New Nigeria that the President intends as his legacy.

As Nigerians we not only understand the importance of our role in the development and future prosperity of our continent, but our wider international responsibilities, in Africa especially, where we supported the establishment of a no fly zone over Libya to save innocent civilians from horrific violence and played a lead role in diplomatic efforts toward a political solution in Ivory Coast. Our military units continue to lead the African Union forces in Sudan and we remain the fourth largest troop contributor to the United Nations.

Nigeria continues to be a reliable and responsible stakeholder on the international stage even as we strive to deal with the intricacies of our complex polity through credible elections, the rule of law and due process - the democratic way. In pursuing a program of enlightened governance, Nigeria looks to its international friends and allies for empathy, understanding and support. Under the stewardship of President Jonathan, Nigeria is committed to developing and sustaining an enduring culture of democracy in our country and on our continent.

END

Kaplan, Philip

From: Kaplan, Philip
Sent: Monday, May 02, 2011 5:18 PM
To: 'edit.features@wsj.com'
Subject: Op-Ed Submission by Nigerian Foreign Minister

Dear Mr. Dickman,

Please find below an op-ed entitled The New Nigeria, submitted by Nigerian Foreign Minister Odein Ajumogobia. The piece addresses the recent presidential, parliamentary and governors elections in Nigeria, the violence that followed and the commitment of President Goodluck Jonathan to bring about a more transparent Nigeria.

Philip S. Kaplan
United States Ambassador (Ret.)
Partner
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Washington, DC 20037

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mistrust in sections of a diverse polity requires patience, wisdom and understanding.

No person can attain the presidency of Nigeria without widespread support across ethnic and religious lines. This is indeed one of the imperatives of our Constitution. The person elected as President must win, not just the highest number of votes cast at the election. Dr Jonathan received almost double the number of votes - 22.5million votes - of his closest rival's 12.2 million votes - but must also obtain "not less than one quarter of the votes cast ... in each of at least two thirds of the thirty-six states of the Federation." Dr Jonathan met this latter condition in thirty-one states.

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As Nigerians we not only understand the importance of our role in the development and future prosperity of our continent, but our wider international responsibilities, in Africa especially, where we supported the establishment of a no fly zone over Libya to save innocent civilians from horrific violence and played a lead role in diplomatic efforts toward a political solution in Ivory Coast. Our military units continue to lead the African Union forces in Sudan and we remain the fourth largest troop contributor to the United Nations.

Nigeria continues to be a reliable and responsible stakeholder on the international stage even as we strive to deal with the intricacies of our complex polity through credible elections, the rule of law and due process - the democratic way. In pursuing a program of enlightened governance, Nigeria looks to its international friends and allies for empathy, understanding and support. Under the stewardship of President Jonathan, Nigeria is committed to developing and sustaining an enduring culture of democracy in our country and on our continent.

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END

Kaplan, Philip

From: Kaplan, Philip
Sent: Monday, May 16, 2011 1:05 PM
To: 'lena.jensen@newsweekdailybeast.com'
Subject: Opinion Piece By Nigerian Foreign Minister

Dear Ms. Brown,

Please find below an opinion piece entitled *The New Nigeria* by Nigerian Foreign Minister Odein Ajumogobia which we are submitting to Newsweek and/or The Daily Beast. The piece addresses the recent presidential elections in Nigeria, the violence that followed and the commitment of President Goodluck Jonathan to bring about a more democratic and transparent Nigeria.

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In May 2010, President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan assumed full responsibilities of the Presidency in an orderly constitutional transition of power following the death of our former president, Umaru Musa Yar Adua. President Jonathan promptly pledged to ensure that the elections set for 2011 would be free and fair. He consulted extensively and set in motion a process to redeem this commitment. In October, he appointed a respected expert, Professor Attahiru Jega, as Chair of Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and invested him with full powers to ensure that high standards of integrity and effectiveness would guide the conduct of the elections and the counting of votes. These decisions were not popular with all our politicians and their supporters; change rarely is.

Predictably there was some resistance and formal complaints of electoral malpractices from some candidates. Senseless and wanton post-electoral violence followed the elections in some Northern states. The carnage came

in response to unexpected or undesired electoral outcomes; it was fuelled further by an incendiary mix of misinformation, youth unemployment and disillusionment.

Needless to say, the Courts will have an opportunity to review all allegations of abuse and the chips will fall where they may. The President has pledged that those responsible for the post-election carnage and any proven electoral offences will be brought to justice.

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As Nigerians, we accept our responsibility for the development and prosperity of our continent, and our wider international responsibilities, in Africa especially. We have supported the establishment of a no fly zone over Libya to save innocent civilians from horrific violence and played a lead role in diplomatic efforts toward a political solution in Ivory Coast. Our military units continue to lead African Union forces in Sudan. We remain the fourth largest troop contributor to the United Nations and a constructive member of the UN Security Council.

In short, Nigeria is a reliable and responsible stakeholder on the international stage even as we strive to deal with the intricacies of our complex polity through credible elections, the rule of law and due process - the democratic way. We have much still to do, but under the stewardship of President Jonathan, Nigeria is committed to enlightened governance, to curbing corruption and to sustaining an enduring culture of democracy in our country and on our continent.

END

Kaplan, Philip

From: Kaplan, Philip
Sent: Monday, May 23, 2011 4:43 PM
To: 'tunku.varadarajan@newsweekdailybeast.com'
Subject: Opinion Piece By Nigerian Foreign Minister

Importance: High

Dear Mr. Varadarajan,

President Jonathan is be sworn in for a full term as Nigeria's president on Sunday and we are eager to hear back from you regarding the opinion piece repeated below for your ease of reference.

Sincerely yours,

Philip S. Kaplan
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In short, Nigeria is a reliable and responsible stakeholder on the international stage even as we strive to deal with the intricacies of our complex polity through credible elections, the rule of law and due process - the democratic way. We have much still to do, but under the stewardship of President Jonathan, Nigeria is committed to enlightened governance, to curbing corruption and to sustaining an enduring culture of democracy in our country and on our continent.

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